



John Elliott Leighton

Board Certified Civil Trial Lawyer

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Serious lawyers for serious cases.™

John Elliott Leighton is the managing partner of Leighton Law, P.A., a Miami and Orlando boutique trial law firm. Mr. Leighton represents victims of negligence and the families of those whose lives have been taken due to the fault of others. He is a Board Certified Civil Trial Specialist by the Florida Bar Board of Legal Specialization. He specializes in catastrophic injury, maritime, Resort Torts/vacation injuries, inadequate premises security/violent crime, motor vehicle/motorcycle, brain injury, medical malpractice, product liability, legal malpractice and complex commercial litigation.

He is an accomplished author, having published numerous articles, books and book chapters on a variety of personal injury and trial skills topics. His writings have been featured articles in *Trial* magazine seven times. He is a frequent national lecturer at legal programs and conventions and has spoken and taught at seminars, colleges and conventions in over a dozen states.

Mr. Leighton regularly chairs trial skills colleges and seminars for the National College of Advocacy/American Association for Justice (formerly The Association of Trial Lawyers of America [ATLA]). He sits on the National College of Advocacy Board of Trustees Executive Committee and past Chairman of ATLA's Motor Vehicle, Highway and Premises Liability Section. He is the current Chairman of the Inadequate Security Litigation Group, which he has chaired since 1996. He also currently serves as the Chairman of the Academy of Trial Advocacy, a national invitation-only organization of the country's leading catastrophic injury trial lawyers. He is also a charter member of the Cooperative Association of Medical Malpractice Attorneys, a national consortium of top medical malpractice trial lawyers. He is on the national Board of Advisors of the National Crime Victim Bar Association, and is the recipient of that Bar's 2007 "Advocate of Justice" award.

Mr. Leighton is the author of the two volume text, *Litigating Premises Security Cases* (Thomson-West Publishing). It is the most comprehensive treatise on investigating, preparing, litigating and trying inadequate premises security cases, and it is updated annually by Mr. Leighton.

He has been sought out to consult and litigate premises security cases throughout the United States, including Indiana, Wisconsin, Texas, Hawaii and Georgia. His trial in *Jeffery v. Publix Super Markets*, a landmark premises security case in Florida, was the subject of an entire chapter in the book *Persuasive Jury Communication: Case Studies from Successful Trials*, Chapter 10 (Shepard's/McGraw-Hill, 1995).

Having obtained some of the state's largest verdicts and settlements in major personal injury and wrongful death cases, Mr. Leighton continues to represent families throughout Florida and selectively around the country. His medical malpractice verdict in *Shoaf v. Geiling* of \$24.1 million was the largest verdict in Seminole County history (*Orlando Business Journal*, 6/20/2005). He followed that in 2011 with a \$24.3 million verdict in Orange County for the wrongful death of an off duty police officer (*Gordon v. Terry, et al.*), which was one of the *American Lawyer's* largest verdicts of 2011 in the United States. The arbitration award of \$8 million he obtained in *Seetaram v. United Rentals*, arising out of a truck crash, is one of the largest known single death awards in Broward County for a minor child. In September 2013 Mr. Leighton obtained a \$7.35 million verdict in a trucking crash case where his client suffered a leg amputation (*Erb v. Peninsula*). He is often called upon to handle catastrophic and complex matters in other states, and has litigated and tried complex cases in Texas, Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Georgia, New York and North Carolina. Mr. Leighton's victories on behalf of families who have lost loved ones to negligence have resulted in record setting wrongful death verdicts and settlements.

Leighton was lead counsel in the nationally-recognized parasailing death case involving 15 year-old Amber May White. Amber and her sister Crystal were parasailing in Pompano Beach, Florida in August 2007 when an improperly maintained parasail combined with negligence on the part of the operator caused the parasail to break loose, hurtling the two girls into a hotel. Amber was killed and Crystal suffered head injuries. Leighton has fought for passage of a law regulating the parasailing industry, known as "the Amber May Act."

Mr. Leighton has received wide recognition for his results in wrongful death cases. He is often invited to speak to attorneys around the country on strategies for maximizing damages in death cases, and has been recognized for obtaining some of the largest wrongful death and catastrophic injury awards and settlements in the United States, including:

- \$24.3 million verdict for the death of a 52 year-old police officer
- \$24.1 million verdict for catastrophic medical malpractice injuries
- \$11.25 million settlement for brain damage to a young child
- \$9 million for a woman who sustained brain injuries from a medical mistake
- \$8 million award for the death of a 19 year-old student
- \$7.35 million verdict for a leg amputation
- \$5.5 million for the death of a 49 year-old married father of three
- \$5 million for a young woman with serious orthopedic trauma from a vehicle crash
- \$4.3 million for the death of a 35 year-old mother of two children
- \$3.75 million for a baby who suffered brachial plexus injuries from medical malpractice at birth
- \$3.65 million for the death of a teenager in motor vehicle crash
- \$3.25 million for a man who suffered a brain injury in a motorcycle crash
- \$3 million for a man paralyzed from a robbery at an ATM
- \$3 million for the death of a 35 year-old mother of three due to medical malpractice
- \$2.8 million for the wife of a man killed in a plane crash
- \$2.575 million for death of 54 year-old woman
- \$2.1 million for a woman with closed head injuries from a boating accident at a resort
- \$2 million for death of 14 year-old boy

\$1.9 million for 36 year-old father of five
\$1.8 million for the death of a 15 year-old in a resort injury
\$1.76 million for a man injured in a motorcycle crash
\$1.6 million for death of 30 year-old mother of two
\$1.510 million verdict for a man shot and injured while coming to the aid of a robbery victim
\$1.5 million for the inadequate security death of a college student
\$1.5 million for death of 20 year-old college student
\$1.136 million for a sexual assault at a shopping center
\$1 million for the death of a woman following gastric bypass surgery

Mr. Leighton has been selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*, voted as one of the “Top Lawyers” in the *South Florida Legal Guide* for the last ten years, has been named a *Florida SuperLawyer*™ (and voted as one of the top 100 of all Florida SuperLawyers), and has been elected to the *Florida Trend* magazine “Legal Elite” Top Lawyers in Florida by peer selection. He is rated as “10.0/10 - Superb” by AVO.com and holds an AV rating (highest possible) by Martindale-Hubbell. Mr. Leighton received his undergraduate and law degrees with honors from the University of Florida, where he was an editor of the *Florida Law Review*, competed on the Trial Team, and taught first year jurisprudence.